

A Collection of Glass Jars

BY SAMANTHA STEELE

Welcome to the Dinner Party, Mr. Macabre

"Why, good evening! Welcome to the dinner party, Mr. Macabre. May I take your coat?" Mrs. Livingston ushered him through the door, snow and cold wind billowing in.

"That would be lovely," he replied, removing his hat and long black suit coat. He began to pluck the sleeves loose of his tailed blazer and undo his cravat.

"Mr. Macabre!"

"Just one more thing," he brushed his hand dismissively. He grabbed either side of his face and gave his head a light wiggle, and like a silk gown he withdrew his skin from beneath his clothes. The skeleton of Mr. Macabre handed over the floppy, tan sack. "I'm sorry I'm a touch late. Don't mind me as I make my way over to the kitchen for a little refreshment!"

Life of the Party

Laughter erupted, women doubled over in their satin red gowns. Men had to clutch their sides. With another punchline nailed, Ms. Wells was clearly the life of the party. "Ah, it kills me," she smiled, wiping a tear from her eye. But inside she felt her heart and organs weakening by the hour, deteriorating faster with every joke.

The Writer

"I write! I'm a poet by trade!" The girl of his dreams wasn't interested. She turned away from him, trying to ignore him better.

The job trader sat with him, nodding along with quiet disappointment to his story. "I knew I should have bid on investment banker," the poet sighed. "If I can't win her love, at least I could have bought it."

Wax

Mr. Smith loved his one-story house made of wax. One day, because he forgot to turn the air conditioning on, the sun was too hot and it started to melt the roof. As the ceiling began to drip onto him and cover him in plastic goo, he sighed in happy wonder. "Now nothing can ever hurt me," he smiled, embalmed in real estate.

The Cliffs by the Sea

The cliff stood tall and proud, a stoic and lovely monolith. And the ocean would sit still, speechless with admiration. One day it began to wave, crashing into the cliff a couple times, soon a hundred, and suddenly countless times until endlessly and endlessly it crashed into the land. Every day the cliff wore away, until a long, beautiful sandy beach stretched out where they once stood. "Why did you do this!" the once-cliff cried. "You ruined everything about me!"

"Because I'm in love with you," the ocean sobbed. "And if all I can do is kiss you, then I'll do that for the rest of my life."

The Dreamer

The dreamer lay awake most nights. She couldn't wait to escape into her world of filling out tax forms, brushing teeth, and sitting in the lobby for a doctor's appointment. Reality was such a bore to her, getting lost in a labyrinth on the way to an extravagant dinner party, or opening the door to your house to an aquarium full of octopi to swim with, or dogs that jump from planes and become firefighters. Some nights she was so excited to dream that she couldn't fall asleep at all.

Darling

"Darling, I'm a writer!" he cried, trying to explain it to her. But he could already see that the brightness had passed from her eyes. He had so few words left to say to her. And words are all I have, he thought miserably. She left that night, with a note on the door, misspellings and grammar errors everywhere.

A Collection of Glass Jars

She used to collect air from all over the world. Whenever she traveled, she had a glass mason jar and ceremonially she'd step off the plane, scoop it in front of her, and "collect" the air. She had gone to all the continents in the world and even the middle of some of the oceans, and had a shelf in her room for her jars. In fact, above the shelf it said, "A Collection of Air from All Over the World." Once, in the middle of the night, an earthquake hit and smashed all the jars and let loose all her captured air. So she gathered all the shards and put them in a jar and relabeled her shelf to say, "A Collection of Earthquakes from All Over the World."